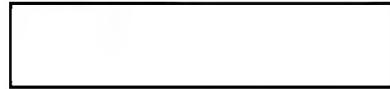


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INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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5 January 1970

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Approved For Release 2003/01/29 : CIA-RDP79T00975A015300050001-6

Approved For Release 2003/01/29 : CIA-RDP79T00975A015300050001-6

SECRET

No. 0004/70
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South Vietnam: Communist military action picked up over the weekend, especially in the northern provinces.

The scope and magnitude of these attacks, together with numerous signs pointing to increased hostilities in other areas soon, suggests that another phase of the Communists' winter-spring campaign may now be under way. For the most part, however, the bulk of the attacks were staged by local force and sapper units with main force infantry units held back, possibly to be committed in a subsequent and more intense phase.

Many enemy units have completed their combat preparations since mid-December, [redacted]

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[redacted] Communist units in the northern provinces of Quang Tri, Quang Nam, and Quang Ngai, as well as in III Corps, appear to be ready for action primarily against allied outposts and lines of communication. Recent enemy ammunition supply movements suggest that future attacks are likely to feature numerous shellings, possibly including large-caliber rocket strikes on key US installations.

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USSR: The USSR is planning to increase its shipping service to US and Canadian Pacific ports in 1970 [redacted]

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The Soviet-owned Far Eastern Steamship Company reportedly will for the first time call monthly at Portland and Seattle and beginning in January will increase its sailings to Canadian Pacific ports from two to three each month. Until the visit of a Soviet freighter to the US West Coast in June 1969 to unload a cargo of titanium sponge, no Soviet ship had called at a US port to load or discharge commercial cargo since 1950. Since the June visit, however, three Soviet cargo ships have stopped at US Pacific ports.

Some Western shippers already have expressed concern over possible Soviet competition. The Soviet shipping company, which is not a member of the international shipping organization that sets rates for cargo carried on this route, has announced price cuts 25 percent below established rates for shipping steel products from Japan to the Northwest. Increased Soviet sailings in 1970 reportedly will result from a contract to ship rolled steel products from Japan to the Pacific Northwest. The Soviet company is also considering shipments of miscellaneous Japanese goods to the US. [redacted]

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Romania: The government has carefully and cautiously liberalized the law regulating the stay of foreigners in Romania.

The new statute clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of visitors and resident aliens while they are in Romania. Foreigners now are required to register with police only if they are in the country over 90 days, instead of within 24 hours. In penal cases, the new law permits non-domiciled foreigners--including tourists, businessmen and professors--to post the stipulated bail and depart before the proceedings are completed. The previous law did not permit the departure of foreigners under such circumstances.

While the new statute is more comprehensive and less severe than its predecessor, it is not indicative of widespread reform. In line with past procedures, the new law still calls for close supervision of all foreigners, for instance, the requirement that aliens staying in the country over 90 days must carry identity cards and must report annually to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

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